

# SHINE families serve



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

## Hello Shine Families!

This month, we are focusing on the practice of serving others together. I define Christian formation like this: a lifelong journey of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Shine Families are on this journey of learning to be like Jesus, and serving others together is one of the key practices.

In John 13, Jesus washes the disciples' feet and says to them, "If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do" (verses 14–15 CEB). Throughout the New Testament, Jesus models a way of life that is characterized by humility and compassion.

When we are following Jesus, the Holy Spirit seems to give us "eyes to see" opportunities to serve others. Children often see ways to help, and we can be alert to the opportunities to empower our children to serve others. When your family serves others together, you are practicing faith together.

Serving others also becomes a way to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always with you to inspire and guide you. Sometimes we think of people, seemingly out of the blue, who we could help in some specific way. Are these promptings of the Holy Spirit?

How will we know unless we begin to follow through and see what happens? On the whole, we learn more and grow more when we practice.

I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to show you one modest and manageable act of service that your family can do together. Then be alert, watching and waiting for it. When you get it, trust that there will be time and energy in your family life to do it together.

As you look through the ideas in this folder, we hope you'll be inspired to serve others together!

Blessings to you!

*Shana Peachey Boshart*

Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator



Illustration by Kate Cosgrove

# SHINE everywhere

If I, your Lord  
and teacher,  
have washed your feet,  
you too must  
wash each  
other's feet.

—John 13:14  
(CEB)





serve



# On the Way

We can connect with one another and talk about God right in the middle of all that we are doing. Deuteronomy 6:4–7 reminds us that we can talk about God when in our houses, when walking, when going to bed, and when getting up. Anytime is a good time for including faith-talk in our lives. The activities below are easy to do when you are on the move.

## Helping Hands

Say this poem out loud while creating a rhythm by tapping your hands on your knees and then clapping them together. Say the poem together. Then one person will list one way they can be helpful. Repeat the poem, taking turns naming ways to help. For a challenge, see if you can work through the letters of the alphabet. For example, an idea for the letter *D* could be putting away dishes.

“My hands can help. My hands can share. My hands can do good everywhere.

My hands can \_\_\_\_\_ (name a way to help).”

(Repeat.)



## Look at That!

Play a version of the game I Spy. One person will choose an object that reminds them of a way that people help. That person will say “I spy with my little eye, something that is \_\_\_\_\_ (name a color).” Others take turns guessing the object. Once the object has been guessed or revealed, everyone can talk about a way it can be used to help someone.



## A Window on Service

Books can be windows to the ways that others serve. You could borrow books from your library that focus on kindness or service. Here are a couple of titles to consider: *Every Little Kindness* by Marta Bartolj (a wordless book that even young children can understand) or *Finding Kindness* by Deborah Underwood.

## Saying Thanks!

Think of someone who has blessed your family by helping. Cut out the thank you card on the next page. Write a note to the person and give them the card.

## Blessing Prayers

Cut out the blessing on the next page. Choose the side that fits your family and hang it where you will notice it as you leave the house. Pause to pray this blessing each day before you leave.





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My hands  
can help.  
My hands  
can share.  
My hands  
can do good  
everywhere.



*You have blessed us. Thank you!*

Cover art by LaTonya Jackson

**SHINE**  
everywhere

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Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

God, bless  
our hands  
that we  
may serve  
others.



# Secret Service

Find a bowl or basket. Set out pieces of paper and pens or crayons. Now each person in the family can think of one or two ways that others can help them. The tasks can be easy to do and not very time-consuming. Write these ideas down or draw pictures of the jobs on the papers—one request per page. Fold the papers up and put them in the bowl or basket.

Over the month, everyone can choose papers out of the bowl or basket and see if they can secretly complete the requested tasks. Two people can pair up and work on the tasks together as well. Have fun! See how many acts of secret service you can finish. Maybe you could share a special meal or dessert together when the bowl or basket is empty.

## Why Serve?

Jesus set us an example of serving others by washing his disciples' feet. Can you think of other teachings of Jesus that inspire us to serve others? Talk together about these stories and how they help us to follow Jesus. You might want to look at John 13, Matthew 25, and Luke 10:25–37.

Why is serving others part of following Jesus? How might serving others draw us closer to God? Who are people you know who serve others? What organizations in your community serve others?

## Unlimited!

Unscramble the following words. You can write your answers below each word. The images below are hints for the solution.

IMET

ONEMY

FDOO

SUMIC

KOOSB

LOCHETS

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Imagine that you had unlimited amounts of these items. What would you do to serve others? Draw a picture of that idea in the box. Print more copies of this activity using the QR code on the front panel.





## Dear Parents and Caregivers,

An adult at a workshop recently talked about how she had stopped watching news programs. “It’s all bad news! Where are the people who are helping?”

It’s true that bad news often makes headlines. It’s also true that the world is filled with helpers. All across the world and right around the corner, people are choosing to care for one another. News agencies might not be reporting much on kindness, but our world is woven together by many ordinary, daily acts of service. When we point them out and choose to include our children in simple, caring tasks, we help our children feel capable and hopeful.

Fred Rogers tells a story that gives an example of this kind of parenting. When he was a child, he was frightened by something he heard on the news. Fred’s mother gave him good advice: “Look for the helpers.” She told him that he would always find people who were helping. Fred went on to create the children’s television program *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. He shared his mother’s message with his viewers, whom he called his “television neighbors.” Fred’s program showed helpers from many different walks of life. He encouraged children to see themselves as important people in the world, capable of giving and receiving kindness.

Your day-to-day example is a more powerful force in your child’s life than you might think. Research suggests that talking about your faith and living it out by caring for others in your home is more strongly connected with teens’ growing faith than even a good Christian education program (Benson and Eklin; Roehlkepartain, 1990).

Teachers in early elementary schools sometimes have children take turns being the special helpers in their classrooms. Students are usually excited to take their turn. For that special day, they are able to show that they can be responsible and caring.

Parenting naturally means service. As you go about the routine tasks of caring for your family, be encouraged! Your example is important. You can help your children notice acts of service and choose to care for others. You can look for and be helpers—all the while growing closer to each other and to God.

We are cheering you on!

*The Shine Team: Joan Daggett, Joyce Peachey Lind, Rachel Nussbaum Eby, and Shana Peachey Boshart*

